

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 0181

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EC, GR
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR THEODOROPOULOS NAMED TO HEAR GREEK-EC
NEGOTIATIONS

BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE:

1. THE GOG ANNOUNCED JANUARY 5 THAT AMBASSADOR BYRON THEODOROPOULOS, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WILL ASSUME CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GREEK COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. THEODOROPOULOS WILL REPLACE NICHOLAS KYRIAZIDIS, WHO EARLIER THIS WEEK RESIGNED SUDDENLY FROM HIS POSITIONS BOTH AS DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF GREECE AND AS CHAIRMAN OF THE EC NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE.

2. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, GREGORY VARFIS, DIRECTOR GENERAL IN THE COORDINATION MINISTRY AND PERHAPS GREECE'S MOST EXPERIENCED TECHNICAL LEVEL OFFICIAL ON GREEK-EC ISSUES, ALSO RESIGNED FROM BOTH HIS MINISTRY POSITION AND HIS MEMBERSHIP ON THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE.
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COMMENTING PUBLICLY ON THE KYRIAZIDIS/VARFIS RESIGNATIONS, WHICH CAME AS A GENERAL SURPRISE, COORDINATION MINISTER PAPALIGOURAS YESTERDAY ATTRIBUTED THE RESIGNATIONS TO DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN KYRIAZIDIS AND VARFIS ON THE ONE HAND, AND DEPUTY COORDINATION MINISTER KONTOGEORGHIS ON THE OTHER.

3. WITH THIS SHAKE-UP, THE FIVE-MAN GREEK COMMITTEE NOW CONSISTS, IN ADDITION TO THEODOROPOULOS, OF AGRICULTURE PROFESSOR DIMITRIOS TALELIS (WHO IS ALSO PRESIDENT OF THE GREEK PRODUCTIVITY CENTER), DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF HELLENIC INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK (ETVA) STAVROS DIMAS, LONDON UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR ALEXANDROS CHLOROS, AND COMMERCE MINISTER DIRECTOR GENERAL ATHANASIOS ANDREOPOULOS. CHLOROS AND ANDREOPOULOS WERE ON THE ORIGIN COMMITTEE, THE OTHERS ARE NEW; THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, PRIOR TO THEODOROPOULOS' NOMINATION, HAD AN UNFILLED POSITION ON THE COMMITTEE. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL; COMMENT: THE ASSIGNMENT OF THEODOROPOULOS, TO LEAD THE EC COMMITTEE WILL, IN LIGHT OF GREECE'S CONTINUING PRESSURE FOR A SPEEDY PACE FOR THESE NEGOTIATIONS, PROBABLY LEAVE HIM LITTLE TIME FOR OTHER FOREIGN MINISTRY RESPONSIBILITIES OR FOR THE US BASE NEGOTIATIONS. THIS MAY IMPLY THE GOG'S RELATIVE PRIORITIES BETWEEN THESE TWO SETS OF NEGOTIATIONS. THE CHOICE OF THEODOROPOULOS WAS ALSO DOUBTLESSLY INFLUENCED BY HIS STRONG PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN BRUSSELS, WHERE HE WAS AMBASSADOR TO THE EC BEFORE BECOMING GREEK PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO NATO. MOREOVER, HE IS REGARDED AS ONE OF GREECE'S BEST NEGOTIATORS AND MOST ABLE CAREER DIPLOMATS, AND THEREFORE HIS APPOINTMENT MAY REFLECT A DESIRE TO BRING A BROADER FOREIGN POLICY CAST TO THE GREEK NEGOTIATING TEAM. IT IS NOT CLEAR AT THE MOMENT WHAT THE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WERE WHICH LED TO THE KYRIAZIDIS-VARFIS RESIGNATIONS, AND TO CONFIDENTIAL

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WHAT EXTENT THEY WERE ECONOMIC/TECHNICAL OR TACTICAL, BUT THE EMBASSY HOPES TO REPORT MORE ON THIS LATER. KUBISCH

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